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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7337
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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1720
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1534
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RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 001930

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STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
G/TIP
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SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CORRECTED COPY: HUMAN TRAFFICKING/SMUGGLING ON
THE HAITIAN BORDER

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¶1. SUMMARY. Kenel Senatus of Solidarite Fwontalye (SF), a Haitian-based human rights/anti-human trafficking organization in Ouanaminthe, reported that human trafficking and alien smuggling are widespread and openly conducted at Haiti's northeastern border with the Dominican Republic. Traffickers regularly transport both adults and children across the border, where they are destined to serve as cheap manual labor, domestic servants, or prostitutes. Weak GoH institutions remain ineffective in combating the well-organized human trafficking trade. A recent G/TIP-sponsored anti-trafficking initiative implemented by the Pan-American Foundation (PADF) aims to augment grassroots efforts by SF, which at present is the only organization conducting anti-trafficking activity along the border. Without policies and efforts coordinated between the GOH and the Dominican Republic, however, little will stand in the way of traffickers' continuing their criminal activities with impunity. End summary.

¶2. Poloff, accompanied by G/TIP staffers Barbara Fleck and Kathleen Bresnahan, met on October 29 with members of Solidarite Fwontalye (SF) in the town of Ouanaminthe, located on Haiti's northeastern border with the Dominican Republic (DR). SF is a NGO dedicated to the promotion of human rights for Haitians living in the northeastern border areas and to the prevention of human trafficking across the Haiti/DR border. The meeting focused on trafficking in persons, particularly children.

¶3. Kenel Senatus, SF's coordinator for human rights, noted that the trafficking of persons across the Haiti/DR border is widespread and openly conducted. Senatus claimed that most trafficking occurs on market days, when Haitians most frequently cross the border to the DR market-town Dajabon to buy goods to bring back to Haiti. Haitians who are trafficked to the DR are generally used for three functions: cheap manual labor, domestic service, and prostitution.

¶4. Senatus told Poloff that children are trafficked across the border for the same reasons, but are also used as full-time beggars. (Note: He added that he heard unconfirmed reports that children are trafficked for their organs as

well. He was unable to provide evidence, however, to substantiate the claim. End note.) Senatus claimed that traffickers on both sides of the border sometimes buy children from internal traffickers who acquire the children from other parts of Haiti and transport them to the border for sale. Senatus also claimed that in other cases, traffickers acquire unsupervised children simply by abducting them. He said furthermore that the average age of trafficked children is 12-15 years and that traffickers in the DR often meet their counterparts at the Dominican border to assume custody and escort the children away.

15. Senatus claimed that human traffickers employ a well-organized network of individuals who directly participate in and profit from trafficking by renting rooms and providing food to victims. On the one hand, he reiterated, officials on both sides of the border are well aware of what is going on, but Dominican immigration authorities are selective in enforcement against traffickers and in repatriating victims. Haitian authorities lack the capacity and presence on the ground to respond to the problem. The Haitian government institutions responsible for protecting the well-being of children, the Institute for Social Well-Being and Research (IBESR) and the Brigade for the Protection of Minors (BPM), do not have a presence in Ouanaminthe. In fact, Senatus claimed that due to the absence of IBESR and BPM, local authorities routinely refer cases to SF for follow-up investigations. SF typically does not intervene when adults are trafficked to the DR because Haiti lacks anti-trafficking laws, and SF believes that many of the adults are in fact economic migrants who consent to the smuggled across the border. SF regularly intervenes, however, in cases where children are involved, and consequently, SF members are sometimes threatened and/or assaulted.

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16. Comment: G/TIP recently awarded the Pan-American Foundation (PADF) \$250,850 to begin work on a Haiti/Dominican Republic Cross-Border anti-trafficking project. PADF will implement the project in Ouanaminthe and will seek to engage SF, the Office of the Mayor of Ouanaminthe, and the local Office of National Migration in the project. SF's involvement is instrumental, as they possess the local knowledge and experience necessary to augment the government capacity on the border. During the visit, Ouanaminthe migration officials demonstrated a willingness to learn anti-trafficking measures from SF. G/TIP hopes that the project will result in increased victim assistance and strengthened capacity and coordination among border officials and civil society actors.

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